(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The outstanding dues of MTNL, inclusive of dues of January 2006, are Rs. 1174 Crores at the end of January, 2006. These relate to bills issued over a period of more than 10 years, and constitute a mere 1.69% of the billed amount. Steps taken by MTNL to recover such dues include persuation, arbitration proceedings, and filing of recovery suits in suitable cases.

Shortage of IT Professionals

2104. SHRIMATI N. P. DURGA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to the report by McKinsey, India is required to produce 23 lakh technology experts by the year 2010 to maintain its superiority in IT and Business Process Outsourcing;

(b) whether it is also a fact that India is short by 5 lakh tech-experts so as to meet the demand; and

(c) if so, what long-term and short-term plans Government and NASSCOM have to meet this demand by 2010?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) NASSCOM-McKinsey Report 2005 indicates that in order to sustain the current market share, India will need 23 lakhs IT and BPO workforce by 2010.

(b) The Report projects a potential shortfall of nearly 5 lakh qualified employees-nearly 70% of which will be concentrated in Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry.

(c) The assessment of human resource requirement for the IT sector is a continuous process. Government of India along with Industry association like NASSCOM have been continuously looking at this sector's requirement from time to time. Government of India had set up a Task Force on 'Human Resource Development in Information Technology' with the main objective to prepare a long-term strategy for significantly increasing

the number of well trained IT professionals in line with economic projections. The Task Force had noted that the issue of manpower gap is not as much about the institutional seat availability as about the nature of skills and training provided in these institutions. The follow-up include, DIT initiating measures to generate manpower in key verticals like bio-informatics, VLSI Design and Information Security; and ITeS-BPO course implemented by DOEACC Society in North East and Jammu and Kashmir to enhance the skills of youth for employment in ITeS-BPO sector.

In addition, initiatives by AICTE include, effective Industry-Institute interactions through collaborative projects with the Industry Association, revision of curriculum so as to meet the necessary requirement and Faculty Development Activities to ensure quality and industry relevance, etc.

The initiatives taken by University Grants Commission (UGC) include Digital Repository of Research and Training material, internet connectivity for universities, information communication and computer education, Teaching innovations in various disciplines and carrer-oriented education programmes.

Institutes of Information Technology have been set up by the Government of India, by the State Governments and also in the private sector to provide qualified IT-related manpower to the Industry.

NASSCOM/Industry's initiatives include comprehensive skill assessment and certification programme for entry-level talent (NASSCOM Assessment of Competence (NAC) and executives (low-middle level management), image enhancement programme to build greater awareness about the career opportunities in this sector and NASSCOM is also working with the academia to encourage/facilitate Industry interaction.

Amendment in IT Act to prevent cyber crimes

2105. SHRI E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to amend the Information Technology Act to meet the increase in cyber crimes;

(b) if so, the sections identified for making amendments; and